

sitting together and watching a sporting event with or anything else.

I don't know the full details of the tragic accident he had, but I can almost see Mike out on his bicycle, in his beautiful State, and enjoying the day. I do mourn his passage, not only as a friend but as somebody who represented what I feel the Senate has been and should be again. So I will yield the floor and only say I miss Mike Enzi.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING MIKE ENZI

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my good friend, the senior Senator from the great State of Vermont.

I, too, feel so badly about Senator Enzi's unfortunate passing. We received the very sad news this morning that Mike Enzi had passed away from injuries sustained on a bicycle accident.

He was only 7 months into his retirement, after four terms in the Senate and decades—decades—of service to his home State of Wyoming.

We will remember him as we remembered him upon his departure from this Chamber, as a kind and gentle man, as a practical legislator, someone who sought common ground and was willing to leave strained disagreements for another day. He was forceful, he was principled, but he was also gentle, a rare and unusual combination and much needed in this body.

He lived by a simple creed, given to him by his mother, that adorned his office, and he shared it with his staff: Do what you think is right; do your best; and treat others the way they wish to be treated.

Upon his retirement, those were the values he asked the Senate to remember him by. At the news of his unexpected passing, those are the values we will carry on in his memory. I offer my condolences to his wife Diana and to former Senator Enzi's entire family.

BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. President, now on another matter, Senate business, as Senators continue to finalize the text of the bipartisan infrastructure agreement, the Senate will process several nominations to the executive branch. Today, we will confirm Todd Kim to serve as the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Justice Department, and, tomorrow, the Senate will vote on two nominees to the National Labor Relations Board, who I know will defend the rights and help deal with the rights of working people, so much needed today when there has been such an assault on labor and on working people in America.

Now, the votes of these nominees will in no way interfere with my ability to reconsider the vote on the motion to proceed to a debate on infrastructure. We are making good progress on both

tracks: the bipartisan infrastructure and the budget resolution with reconciliation instructions. And, to reiterate, Senators should prepare to work through the weekend in order to finish the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

JANUARY 6 COMMISSION

Now, about January 6, this morning a special committee of the House of Representatives will convene for the first time to begin an inquiry into the events of January 6. It is important we do this. January 6 was one of the darkest episodes in the history of our democracy, the first time the Capitol was breached since the War of 1812.

In both the runup and aftermath, vicious lies about our elections fueled dangerous conspiracies and mob violence. We must establish a trusted account of what transpired on January 6, what and who caused it. Not just the people in the building, as bad as they were, but many others may have been involved, as well, and I am hopeful that this inquiry will get to the bottom of that. We have to do this to make sure that such an event is never repeated.

But let me say, Mr. President, we have traveled a very sorry road to get to this place. The special committee in the House was forced into existence because Senate Republicans and Leader MCCONNELL blocked the formation of an independent commission, appointed on a bipartisan basis, to report on the events of the 6th. We had modeled it on the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, but Leader MCCONNELL stood in the way.

How did we come to such a moment? Well, in the immediate aftermath of the attack on the Capitol, the House Republican leader said that President Trump "bears responsibility." The Republican leader warned of a "death spiral" for our democracy if election lies told by the losing side were to be believed. Republicans of all stripes, many in this Chamber, demanded accountability and answers.

But, in the last 6 months, all that courage and truth-telling has evaporated into smoke. All that courage and truth-telling has evaporated into smoke. What a shame for the Republican Party. The House Republican leader deputized Members of his own party to negotiate an independent commission with Democrats, and once they did, he stabbed them in the back and instructed his Members to vote against it.

Weeks later, the House Republicans fired the only member of their leadership team willing to call out President Trump's election lies. House Republicans are now likening January 6 to a peaceful protest and a "normal tourist visit."

Again, I would commend to people the New York Times video—40 minutes—that simply documents what happened. And it is appalling to see one of the Congress Members say this was like a normal, peaceful visit when you watch the violence that occurred before your very eyes.

Here in the Senate, the Republican minority mounted a partisan filibuster

to prevent this Chamber from even debating legislation to create an independent commission. Is that amazing? Every Democratic Member was appalled that they wouldn't even let a debate on whether to have a commission go forward.

Four months, that is how long it took for House and Senate Republican leadership, who denounced former President Trump in the aftermath of January 6, who said they held him practically and morally responsible—4 months was all it took for Republican leadership to back down, turn silent, and then thwart an independent investigation into the January 6 attack.

So, today, the House begins an important task under the only circumstances that congressional Republicans would allow. I have no doubt that House Republicans will engage in efforts to discredit even this: the work of a bipartisan panel of investigators. They will dredge up the same dreary talking points. They will call it a witch hunt. They will call Republicans who participate Pelosi Republicans. They will cheapen the public discourse even more than it has already been cheapened and do their level best to sow distrust about any account of what happened on January 6.

For what? Fear of Donald Trump? The belief that their political viability hinges on whitewashing an attempted coup? Who knows.

But let the record reflect that the House will proceed with this important investigation and it will be done by Members from both parties and that it will get at the truth.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. President, now, on student loans, final matter: Right now, across the country, there are 45 million student loan borrowers who owe \$1.7 trillion in student loan debt. In good times, paying off tens of thousands, sometimes hundreds of thousands in debt can be a crushing endeavor, particularly to younger people ready to go out in the prime of life. But during this pandemic, as Americans lost jobs and incomes, it has become even harder to pay back those loans.

Fortunately, the Federal Government provided a lifeline for tens of millions of borrowers when they ordered a pause on most Federal student loan repayments last spring. Of the many steps the government has taken to respond to the COVID crisis, this has been one of the most effective.

Unfortunately, this pause will expire in a little over 2 months, even while many student borrowers are still piecing their lives back together after the pandemic. So later today, I will join Senator WARREN and my House colleagues to call on President Biden to extend the pause on student loan payments until next spring to give Americans more time to get back on their feet.

Along with Senator WARREN, I believe that the Biden administration should go even further and cancel up to